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## Remarks to the Southern Republican Leadership Conference in Charleston, South Carolina

February 21, 1992

*The President.* Thank you, thank you. It is great to be here in Charleston, I'll tell you. I'm delighted to be back in the South. And may I say to our Governor, my dear friend Carroll Campbell, we're grateful for your hospitality and even more for your leadership as one of the finest Governors in the entire country, a real leader, Carroll Campbell. And I might say how pleased I am that Governor Campbell will serve as our national cochairman of the campaign and once again as southern regional chairman. I couldn't be in better hands, and thank you very much.

May I thank the Citadel Bulldog Band over there for some fine music. I appreciate it very much. And this is a real star-studded event. And I want to salute the Governors here today, past and present. I know Governor Jim Martin's here from North Carolina. And Members of the United States Congress, I think four or five Congressmen with us here today, a couple of them with us right here: Congressman Ravenel, hometown boy, and others. And other distinguished guests. And may I say that an early supporter and friend of mine is running for the Senate here, Tommy Hartnett. And I want to see him elected to the United States Senate—former Member of Congress. And I also want to acknowledge key members of our political team: Rich Bond is with us, our new chairman, and Jeanie Austin, doing a superb job. And of course, the conference chairman Martha Edens' superb work here. Keep up the good work, and thank you very much, Martha.

And it's great to be here in South Carolina, host for the first time, but I'm sure not the last time, of this prestigious Southern Republican Leadership Conference. Four years ago, the South led our party to a great victory across the entire country. And this year, the South will lead us to

victory in November 1992.

And just to be perfectly clear about it, I am confident of winning the Presidency for 4 more years. I come here fired up and confident. But I'll need your support. We have much to do these next few months because we have much to do these next few years. Together, we can finish what we've started and move this country forward.

Let me open with a true story from my own past about the old days, Midland, Texas, 1956, trying to organize—I hear Ernie Angelo over there—[laughter]—trying to organize a Republican Party. And this is the gospel truth. I was a precinct judge, a poll judge, polling judge at primary election time, the first time the Republican Party had ever held a primary in Midland County. And Barbara and I were there alternating at the polls, poll watchers. She and I voted Republican, and we represented two-thirds of the Republican vote that year, gospel truth. The only other guy that voted was a slightly inebriated Democrat. He thought he was voting in the—[laughter]—and you can go back and look up the records.

But some of you all are old enough to remember those days. And sometimes if you tried to register Republican, they'd tell you not to bother because there was no Republicans to vote for in the primary. Or times, out and out, there was intimidation, sometimes violence. And we went through a lot back then. And in fact, I'm sure many of you can share similar experiences.

And you say, well, why did we do it? Why did we build a Republican Party in the South when some said it was impossible? We did it because we wanted change, and we did it because we believed in some fundamental values: faith and family, responsi-

bility and respect, community and of course country, the United States of America. And we did it because we saw the Government getting too big and getting into our pockets, into every corner of our lives. And we did it because we worried about our families and our schools and our neighborhoods. And we did it because our taxes always seem to go up at the same time America's problems got worse. And each of us in our own small way finally said, "Enough is enough."

We were upstarts and mavericks. And we challenged the status quo. We challenged the old, what was known as the courthouse crowd, the closed-door, one-party rule of the Democrats. And we did it because we knew Republican principles were right. And they fought us every step of the way. But we fought hard, and we fought fair. And we took our message, smaller Government, better Government, to the people of the Carolinas and Virginia and Mississippi and Florida and the rest of this great region of America.

And we started winning, at first a House seat here and a Senate race there. But our momentum grew. Momentum grew, and it grew. And we owe a great debt of gratitude to our standard bearer in those early days, those that were out front: Howard Baker, the late John Tower, the Bo Calloways and Bill Brocks, Drake Edens and Clark Reeds, and Bill Dickinson and John Paul Hammerschmidt and of course, the phenomenal favorite son of South Carolina, right behind me, Strom Thurmond. When I think back to one year ago almost to this very day, the tough decision that had to be made about committing your sons and daughters into a war, Strom Thurmond was of more support to me than any single Senator in the United States Senate. And we should be grateful for him.

Well, these leaders paved the way, and they inspired a generation of talent that transformed the Nation's political landscape. And I'm thinking now of another South Carolinian, a good man and a good friend, Lee Atwater. We miss him. We miss him still. And it was great to have Sally Atwater flying down with us this afternoon on Air Force One. Sally, we're so pleased to be with you.

Well, today the Republican Party is the force for positive change in the New South, and I'm proud to have played a modest role in that success. Our message then and our message now is simple. Carroll said a lot of it. We believe Government is too big and spends too much. We believe in good schools and safe streets and a Government worthy of the people's respect. And so, we believe in less Government, low taxes. Surely we believe in a strong defense. And we believe that we put America first when we put America's families first.

And so, we believe that parents, not the Government, should make the big decisions. Parents, not Government, should choose their children's schools. Parents, not the Government, should decide the family's health care. And parents should choose who cares for their children, not some bureaucrat in Washington, DC, telling us how to do it. And yes, we believe it ought to be okay to have a voluntary prayer for children in the classroom, and I'm not going to change my view on that ever.

Those are our beliefs. And those are why we built a party in the South and why we continue, with your help, to build it today. Those beliefs don't change from one election to the next. They still guide each and every one of us each and every day.

And now we're at the beginning of a new era in the history of our country. The cold war is over, and America won. The Soviet Union, as we remember it, has collapsed, gone. Imperial communism is finished for good. American leadership changed the world. Republican leadership will change America.

I know we've got tough times, but I am totally confident about our future. But we've got a lot of work ahead of us. There are some things that are simply on the wrong track in our country. Take our courts, for example. When fathers stop coaching Little League because they're afraid of liability lawsuits, something is wrong. And when doctors stop delivering babies because they fear a malpractice lawsuit, something's wrong. Or when people stop volunteering to help each other because they fear ambulance-chasing lawyers, something is terribly wrong. These days a sharp lawyer would tell the Good Samari-

tan, "Keep on walking."

We've proposed reforms to our court system—they've got them sitting up there in the United States Senate now—to address the questions of frivolous lawsuits, and that's a good step. But the real answer for solving problems is to be more concerned with helping each other than suing each other.

And then I think about our Nation's health care system. Our health care system provides, and let's not forget this, the highest quality care anywhere in the world. But it's not perfect. We all know that. And too many people do not have access to health insurance. Too many people worry that they're going to lose their coverage if they change jobs or, worse still, if they lose their job. And anybody who's had even minor surgery knows that health care costs are going through the roof.

The answer is not to go down the road of socialized medicine with its long lines and faceless, impersonal service. If that's what we wanted, we'd put our doctors and nurses to work for the department of motor vehicles. Our plan, my approach, written out in detail, is to reform our health system, make insurance available to all, keep the quality high, the bureaucracy low, and preserve choice. And that is vital. And the last thing we want is the Government standing between you and your doctor.

And then there's the sorry welfare system. It's pretty obvious that the system now too often perpetuates dependency when it should promote independence, promote initiative. We need to encourage individual success through personal responsibility, the dignity of a job. And so, I've asked the departments and agencies to make it easier—and this is upon the advice of Jim Martin and Carroll Campbell and others—to make it easier for State and local government to reform the system, reform policies that promote broken families. We need to get people to work, go after the deadbeat fathers who run out on those little kids, or as they do in Wisconsin, to make recipients work or study and to keep families together.

But we all know what the number one issue on the minds of Americans is, and it is the economy. And it's people worried about their jobs, providing for their families, meeting the everyday challenges of paying

the bills and providing a home and teaching the kids and putting aside for our retirement.

The American people, your neighbors, want this economy fired up again, and so do I. And in my State of the Union Address, I put forward a two-part plan. And the first part gets business growing again right now, instantly upgrading plant and equipment again, hiring workers again. It uses incentives like an investment tax allowance. And yes, it is clearly time for the Congress to wake up and cut that tax on capital gains.

And to get housing back on its feet, I put forth several commonsense proposals—they're sitting right there in House now—to get people buying and building homes. And perhaps the most easily understood proposal is a \$5,000 tax credit for first-time homebuyers. With our plan, young people almost able to buy that first home could do it with the extra \$5,000 in their pocket. And the plan we're fighting against in the Congress this very day gives them absolutely nothing, nothing to that first-time homebuyer.

You're worried about the Democrats' current plan. I don't want to say too much about it. It's a nice evening here, and I don't want to ruin it. Current plan, I say current because it seems to change just about every hour as they change it to garner in some votes from the special interests, to buy votes. And that's why it's really not a plan. It is simply a bad deal. It smacks of, and you've heard it before, class warfare. And listen to the tradeoff in their deal: 25 cents a day in temporary tax relief for 2 years, paid for, true to form for the Democrats, by a large permanent tax increase.

Now, some Democrats in the Senate have other ideas. They want to get a bidding war going. But to pay for that they'd have to hike tax rates for the middle class, people making \$35,000, you know, people like teachers and factory workers and everyday Americans. And they won't tell you that about their sorry plan. But that's the estimate I've been given by our experts. Any economist will tell you the last thing our economy needs now is a tax increase by that Democratic Congress. And their plan

adds almost \$30 billion to this deficit. And the jobs it creates are more likely to be for more tax collectors.

I believe the American people have about had it with this tax-and-spend thinking. And we drew a line in the sand in the Persian Gulf and kept our word, and I'll draw another line in the sand right here today. If the Democrats send me this nonsense they're talking about now, I will send it right back. I will veto it the minute it hits my desk.

I sent them a plan, a good one. And that's what they ought to work on, not some phony partisan maneuver that they know won't fly. And I'll say it again to the Congress: Here's the deadline, March 20th. And if we act by then, we can see some results this spring. No more games, no more empty gestures, just pass this plan and get the economy going again, and then we can have all the political fights we want. But let's set it aside now and do something for the American people that are hurting out there.

I said the plan had two parts; you may remember that from the State of the Union. The second part is a long-term plan to keep this country competitive, keep us vigorous. And it's a road map for competing and leading America in this fast-changing world of the 21st century.

Our plan revolutionizes America's educational system. Our plan gets the billions of dollars' worth of cutting-edge Government research and development into the hands of our private sector businesses and the workers faster than ever before. And that helps us get a real return on your tax dollars, investment helping to create new jobs and products.

Our plan provides tax relief to strengthen the family. We raised the tax deduction for children by \$500. Make no mistake, I want this plan passed in this session of Congress. Keep the heat on the Congress, and we can get that done.

But a central idea behind our approach is that to succeed economically at home, we have to lead economically abroad. Carroll touched on this very eloquently. What he means and what I mean is jobs right here in America by opening markets for our exports all over the world. And I'm going to fight hard in every foreign market to do

just exactly that. We've made headway. We have made dramatic headway with this increase in exports, but we are going to do even better.

Some people wish the rest of the world would just go away. That is naive, and that is defeatist. They're saying that a level playing field isn't level enough, that American ingenuity, American know-how, and the American can-do spirit are simply a bunch of hackneyed phrases. I don't believe it. I don't believe that for one minute, and neither do you. America is not going to cut and run, ever. We're going to stay involved, and we are going to continue to lead the entire world.

Before I finish now, I have something to say about this primary campaign. Of course, this campaign is important, not just to me but to you and to our country. And for the sake of our country, we must not turn over the Nation's leadership to the Democrats. Republican leadership must continue.

For 8 years, Ronald Reagan, I was at his side, led this country. For the last 3 years, I've stood on our principles and against a Democratic Congress that would undermine them. And with the help of our Republican leadership on Capitol Hill, 25 times our principles were upheld, vetoes of bad legislation sustained.

And the next 5 years of American history are just too important to entrust to the inexperienced. I believe the American people want to hear about how we're going to address our country's challenges, how we can unite our people, create more opportunity and hope for all Americans. And I believe the American people want to hear solutions, not just a lot of name-calling and running this country down.

And frankly, I also believe that sometimes somebody's got to stand up and say what's right about the United States of America. And you can't hear it from this campaign going on out there. We are number one, and make no mistake about it, and we're going to stay that way.

And another thing, maybe this is just my personal prejudice talking, let's not listen to the gloom and doom from all those intense talking heads who are happy only when

they say something negative. We are the United States of America, and we don't have to put up with all that.

*Audience members.* Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

*The President.* Let me just say, you and I believe in America, and we are optimistic about its future. And we believe in our party. And I am tremendously fortunate to serve as your President at this most exciting time in our Nation's history. Barbara and I count our blessings every day for the good fortune that we have to live in that majestic White House and to do our level-best to serve the people of this great country.

These next primaries are critical. I need your help. I need your help to keep our party strong and united so that we can win this fall. And yes, we have much to do. But I guarantee you, we will get the job done.

And yes, we have many challenges before us. I guarantee you, we will meet them, each and every one of them. And yes, there's an election in November. And I guarantee you this: We will win it. I want to be your President for another 4 years.

Thank you very much. Thank you very, very much. Now let's go out and beat the Democrats in the fall. And may God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

*Note: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. at the Omni Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Richard N. Brown, chairman, and Jeanie Austin, cochairman, Republican National Committee; Martha Edens, chairman, Southern Republican Leadership Conference; and Ernie Angelo, Republican national committeeman from Tennessee.*

## Radio Address to the Nation on the Economy

February 22, 1992

Today I want to talk to you about getting our economy moving. I know there's a lot of debate about how to create jobs and build economic strength, but in the end it all boils down to common sense. To strengthen an economy, you encourage investment. You support industries that pull nations out of recessions. You encourage success.

In my State of the Union Address, I proposed a short-term economic plan that does these things. I challenged Congress to set aside partisan politics for just a few weeks and pass my plan by March 20.

Unfortunately, Democratic leaders refused to submit my plan for a quick, clean vote. They chose politics over duty. They huddled behind closed doors and played games with the Tax Code. They put out one plan one day, another plan the next. Finally, they settled on a scheme that makes no economic sense.

Their proposal won't help homebuyers. Their proposal will increase the deficit. It borrows \$30 billion to pay for a tiny temporary tax cut. For each person in the average family of four, it hands out about a

quarter a day, but only for 2 years. This turns out to be a very costly quarter. After the temporary cut expires, Americans would shoulder the burden of a huge permanent tax increase. In other words, these congressional leaders want to give you 2 years of pocket change in exchange for a lifetime of higher taxes. And that is a very bad deal for us and for our children who must pay the bill.

And now my plan: My plan will create jobs. The real estate incentives alone will generate 415,000 new jobs this year. My plan offers the hope of homeownership to first-time homebuyers. Some people have begun buying homes already, expecting Congress to pass a plan that encourages real estate investment, my plan. Congress shouldn't let those people down.

My plan will not increase the deficit. It makes some tough choices on Federal spending because I refuse to mortgage our children's future for short-term political gain. My plan will not raise tax rates. I want to raise the child deduction on Federal income taxes by \$500, and I want Congress